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DIAMOND-CUTTING.

At first sight, one is quite disappointed with a diamond-cutting mill. I had been feeding my fancy with the idea that a diamond-mill would be a very fine sight, and totally unlike any other manufactory. I had arrived at the conclusion, that it would exceed one of Beverley's transformation-scenes, and be a reality into the bargain. Judge, then, of my chagrin when I found Coster's famous mill at Amsterdam to be a gaunt plain building, and the cutting and polishing of the gems going on in a bare chamber, remarkable for nothing but a series of driving-belts and horizontal turning-lathes. The mantel-pieces were neither of jasper nor malachite, nor were the gates of bronzed metal, nor the door-lintels of lapis-lazuli. All the appurtenances of the factory were of the most work-a-day kind. The men were industriously grinding away at their stones with a decidedly matter-of-course aspect; they seemed to have no feeling of ultra-responsibility about them; no idea that their occupation was an extraordinary one, or that they were intrusted with material of surpassing value. The group of ten diamond-cutters to whom I gave my attention, were working as unconcernedly among their precious stones as if they had been the ten men who are said to be required in making a pin. At Coster's, diamonds appear of no value, except as bringing in a certain sum of money for the work put upon them. The workmen—who seem to be a very superior class of men, and who, I was told, earn large wages—never think of stealing a stone. Diamonds are handed about and looked at and handled in Coster's as if they were made of commoner stuff. I expected to have heard among the workmen no end of diamond-tattle; of Pitts, Orloffs, Regents, marvellous Nassacks, and pear-shaped Sancis; of the twelve Mazarines and other historic gems. But no; the only talk I could hear was of a forthcoming lottery, and the price of dried eels! None of the celebrated diamonds were so much as named: the Sea of Glory, the Mountain of Splendour, the Crown of the Moon—they were never mentioned.

The trade in diamond-polishing has grown enormously in Amsterdam during the last fifty years. More than fifteen out of every sixteen diamonds are cut or polished in Holland. Indian-cut diamonds are not of much value in the markets, in consequence of the cutters disregarding some of the chief rules of the art; and, so far as I can ascertain, there are none of the 'old English' cutters now at work in either London or Birmingham. Three centuries and a half ago, there was only one kind of diamond, the Indian cut or table gems, having only four flat surfaces; now we have 'brilliant,' which are by far the most beautiful of all diamonds, but are cut at a great cost of material. At one time, diamond-cutting in Holland was carried on by only a few individuals, by means of water or horse power, each man working on his own account: it was left for Monsieur Coster to organise this industry in a workshop, and to train workmen till they became highly skilled in the art. Monsieur Coster exhibits models of all the great diamonds that have been cut or recut in his mill, among others, the Star of the South and the Koh-i-noor, as well as a large number of smaller stones of considerable note. The Koh-i-noor was cut in London by Coster, as was also the celebrated Nassack gem, both diamonds costing a large sum of money—the price paid for recutting the last-named stone being a thousand pounds.

The process of diamond-cutting was kept secret for a very long time, but—'diamond cut diamond'—all the world now knows that this precious stone is cut by the help of its own powder. Still, how it is cut is yet to many persons a problem. When they examine a cut stone, a brilliant, for example, they naturally ask how it has obtained these regular forms, these faces cut with such admirable precision. This will not, in future, be such a marvel, for the operations at the Exhibition at Paris have initiated the public into many of the details of this peculiar industry, as perfected by Monsieur Coster in the capital of Holland. The necessary operations are three. The initiatory one consists in cleaning the coarse stone of defective parts, and splitting off the flaws which most diamonds shew

in the rough state. It seems, according to the best lapidaries, that there are few diamonds without cavities or other flaws; indeed, the diamond, as a rule, is more foul than any other stone used in jewellery. The second operation is the cutting, which confers on the stone the form, and in a rough way, the number of faces which it ought to have. Lastly, there is the polishing, which gives to these faces their clearness and brilliancy. In all these operations, the diamond must be firmly set in a tool, and successively undergo the file and scissors. The splitter, when he finds a flaw, commences his work by inserting the diamond into a fusible cement, which hardens extremely as soon as it is cold, and supports the stone with the requisite solidity. This cement is lodged in a kind of cup, at the extremity of a solid handle, which the workman holds in his hands; he then takes in the other hand a second like instrument, furnished with a diamond recently cut, the edge of which projects sharply outside. Supporting the two tools on the border of a box, placed before him on the table, he communicates to them a see-saw motion, and by rubbing on one of the stones the sharp edge of the other, he soon makes a slight cut, which suffices him to introduce a sharp-edged blade, which he strikes lightly, in order to separate the two pieces. Some stones, I was told by the workmen, could not be split in the usual way, in consequence of the risk of destroying them by the operation. These are sawn with a finely-tempered bow-saw, moistened with olive-oil, and sprinkled over with diamond-dust. The splitter, or diamond-trimmer, is much assisted by the natural formation of the stone, which has its line of cleavage well defined. The cleaner, or cutter, has similar instruments to those of the splitter. After having inserted, in his pair of tools, two diamonds of bulk nearly equal, he uses the one for working a face on the other by rubbing with force. When he has thus finished a face on each of the stones, he softens the cement by slightly heating it on a gas-lamp, and then, turning the gem, he commences the next face, and so goes on. Like the splitter, he supports the stone on a little rectangular box, into which the powder falls, which is afterwards used in the polishing. This cutter only forms about one-half of the required facets on any given stone, leaving it to his successor, the polisher, to form the remainder. The cutter only rough-hews the gem; the polisher is the artist who gives it its final shape and lustre. This operation requires a certain muscular effort, and the cutter requires to protect his hands by thick gloves of skin. The box over which the splitter works is provided with a double bottom, the first of which is pierced with holes like a sieve; the powder of the diamond resulting from the rubbing falls into the second compartment, and the larger fragments rest on the sieve, where they can easily be collected, in order to be cut in their turn. The fragments obtained in cutting large stones are sometimes of great value. The chips from one large diamond I have read about were valued at eight thousand pounds. The powder, or diamond-dust, is always burned before being used, in order to cleanse it from oil or any particles of the solder which is necessary to fix the stone. When a cutter or polisher examines his stone by placing it on his tongue, he first carefully dusts the gem with a camel-hair brush, in order to collect the fine powder which is of such value in cutting and polishing.

After coming out of the hands of the cleaner, the diamond has the form and perhaps a third of the number of faces which it ought to have, but its surface is so harsh and irregular, that it requires the polishing to give it finish and brightness. The wheel on which the polishing is accomplished is a turn-table of iron, technically called 'a schyff,' solidly fixed in the middle of a table, and is so arranged as to be of extremely rapid rotation (from two to three thousand revolutions per minute). The metal turn-table receives the diamond-powder, and reduces it to an impalpable state; it is constantly moistened with olive-oil, which softens the friction, and prevents the powder from being projected outside by the centrifugal force. The diamond which is to be polished is set no more in the fusible cement, but in an alloy of lead and tin, to which is given the form of a round cone, of which the stone occupies the summit. The whole is lodged in a spherical cup, which covers one-half, and which is terminated by a straight stem. This stem is seized between the claws of a pincer, and the face of the diamond to be polished is held down with weights of lead, for maintaining the apparatus in a proper position, and augmenting the adherence and friction. The weights vary considerably, running from two to thirty pounds, according as the facet required is to be small or large. The operation either for large or small stones is much the same; the worker is generally able to conduct the polishing of several stones at the same time. The operation of polishing usually takes very long, and requires the exercise of extreme patience: the cutting of certain large diamonds continues for many months.

The art requires that the cutter should have extraordinary skill for working the stones, of which the smallest often do not reach to the size of a pin-head. Nothing equals in this respect the skilfulness of the workers of Holland, and one is quite confounded when one sees stones of such small dimensions cut into twenty-four faces perfectly equal and regular. Some of the stones operated upon at Coster's are so small that it takes hundreds of them to weigh a carat! This is not, however, the only difficulty the diamond-cutter has to surmount; it is the cleaner who has to make choice of the form to be given to each particular stone. It is he who must decide, after a minute examination, how each particular diamond ought to be cut, whether a brilliant or a rose; he determines the choice by an endeavour to lose as little matter as possible. But this is not all. It is necessary that he should recognise at the first glance in what way it is convenient to attack the stone, which is not an easy matter, for if his measures have not been well taken, it may perhaps occur that twenty-three faces having been already cut, the twenty-fourth would require to be cut on an imperfect part of the stone; and so it is found impossible to continue. The cutters and polishers are often thrown out by finding unexpected flaws in the stones, as they proceed with their work. The colour, too, often changes; so that sometimes it is quite impossible to tell how a diamond may turn out; and, as in the case of the Koh-i-noor, one portion of the stone may sometimes prove to be a great deal harder than another part; and if, while cutting, the diamond be allowed to remain too long on the schyff before being taken off to cool, it might melt the lead in which it is set, and so, by changing its position, do very serious injury

to the stone. In cutting the Koh-i-noor, it was necessary at times to increase the revolutions of the schyff to three thousand per minute, in consequence of the extraordinary hardness of some portions of that most valuable gem. It is not always easy to say how much of a stone must be sacrificed in the cutting. The Star of the South, which was cut by Monsieur Coster, weighed in the rough state in which it was found 254½ carats; when finished, the weight was a little under a half of that weight. The Koh-i-noor lost eighty carats in the recutting; it now weighs less than the Star of the South by about twenty carats. Many of the bits split off the larger gems in the process of cutting and polishing, form admirable stones for rings, pins, &c. It is wonderful how small some of the diamonds are that go through Coster's mill, and still more wonderful that they can be cut at all, far less have a score of facets put upon them. Some of the men, I was told, occasionally fall in love with a fine stone, and linger over it in the cutting and polishing with positive devotion. The masters find it politic to interrupt these men in their labour by a change of work. If a man falls in love with such a fine gem as the Star of the South, he is set to work at some dealer's stock brilliants, and allowed to go on with them for a time. The best workmen earn large wages, considerable gratuities being sometimes given by Monsieur Coster for the cutting of particular stones. The demand for precious stones of all kinds, and particularly diamonds, has greatly increased during late years, and, coupled with the growing scarcity of the gem—most of the present mines being comparatively unproductive—has of course tended to raise the price of these valuable adamantine bits of carbon, so that now they can be purchased only by very wealthy people.

ONE OF THE FAMILY.

CHAPTER XXVII.—EVELYN'S TROUBLES.

WHEN the ladies left the Black Squire and his guest to that *tête-à-tête* which we have recorded in the last chapter, Mrs Woodford retired as usual to her boudoir. Evelyn accompanied her, lest her aunt should feel inclined for a game of backgammon; but Clementina was too exhausted with the unwonted effort of entertaining a stranger at dinner, for so energetic a pastime. She lay down on the sofa, and took up the eternal embroidery-frame, which was study and leisure, pleasure and business, to her all in one; nay, it was more to her than such occupations are to those, even of her own sex, who are most devoted to them, for it occupied the place of conversation. Her niece was quite astonished when, after a stitch or two, her aunt opened her thin lips for the passage of an observation. 'Evelyn,' said she in a voice less listless than usual, 'you like this man who has come to be your cousin's tutor?'

'Yes, aunt, I do.'

'I am glad to hear you say that, dear; not because you are telling the truth—for I would rather he had not taken your fancy—but because you tell it so frankly. If you had given me an evasive answer, I should have feared that something more than your fancy was touched. I am a

selfish old woman, you know, and I should be sorry to see you fall in love with anybody.'

'There is no fear, aunt.'

'Yes, there is,' returned Clementina quietly: 'there is always fear for an old woman like me—friendless, alone, unhappy—that is, I mean, but for you, my dear—when I think of the possibility of your leaving me. I should not have minded your marrying Charles Woodford, for I think he would have been good to me; but since your aunt Selina got him put out of the way—O yes, she did: you have suffered at that woman's hands almost as much as I have done—I trust you will not marry at all, until I am dead. You are still very beautiful, although you are not very young, and I shall not keep you long.'

'Pray, don't talk so, dear aunt; you are weak and tired; try and get a little sleep. Uncle will, I daresay, be longer in the smoking-room than usual to-night; but if I do not come back in time to make tea, please tell Mary to say that I have stepped over to the parsonage—that is, if you should not feel well enough to go down to the drawing-room yourself.'

'Very well, Evelyn. But stop a moment—I don't see the key in the *escritoire*.'

'Mary has it, aunt,' returned the girl with a deep-drawn sigh. 'I hoped you would have no need of it.'

'More than ever, child—more than ever,' replied Clementina peevishly. 'Send Mary up to me; and don't be longer than you can help. Evelyn, you don't know what it is—you who have your books and your pleasant thoughts—to be left alone.'

Ere Evelyn left the house, she sought, therefore, what was called the 'housekeeper's room,' where Mary Ripson was always to be found, whose special mission it had become of late years to wait upon Mrs Woodford. Mary had had no open quarrel with her husband, but she had not lived under the same roof with him since he had left 'the Nook,' which he had been obliged to do very soon after his unpleasant interview with Dr Warton at the Wishing-gate. The farm was let, and Miles, as we have said, was once more employed at the wadmine, in no very superior condition to that which he had formerly occupied; while George Adams was head-manager of the works. It was the old, old tale of the Idle and Industrious Apprentices, which never lacks modern illustration. Her semi-widowhood had by no means preyed upon Mary's mind; and although she was no longer young, being, indeed, not far from forty, her form was buxom, and her face more cheerful, if not quite so comely as when she was a bride. As foster-mother to the baby-heir, she had had the run of the library, as well as of the larder, at Dewbank Hall, and as the confidential attendant of Mrs Woodford, she had parted with neither of these perquisites. Even now, as Evelyn enters the snug little apartment on the ground-floor, she finds Mary Ripson sitting before the cozy fire, culling enjoyment, now from the realms of fancy, for she holds a volume of romances in her hand, and now from a less ethereal source, in the shape of liberally buttered toast, which lies upon the tea-tray by her side.

'Lor, Miss Evelyn, how you did make me jump!' cried she. 'I was just getting to the place where the Lady Geraldine thinks she sees the eyes of her great-grandfather's picture a-blinking at her from the wall, and has a suspicion that somebody is behind it.'

'I am going out to the parsonage, Mary, and you had better keep your mistress company while I am gone: she is in very bad spirits to-night, indeed.'

'And no wonder, miss, with the shameful way in which she sees poor Master Bentinck treated. Think of their sending to London for a man with a great beard to keep him in order, as though he were a mere child, instead of as handsome and well-grown a young fellow as any gentleman in the country!'

'Ah, you always spoiled Cousin Bentinck, Mary,' returned Evelyn, holding up her finger reprovingly. 'I don't know whether his faults are not owing to you as much as to anybody. I am as sorry for him as you can be; but I think it was high time that he should have somebody to look after him.'

'Oh, he'll do well enough, don't fear, miss. He's a little frolicsome, that's all. Now, if he only had a nice wife—'

'A wife, Mary? Why, Bentinck is not eighteen.'

'Well, Miss Evy, I was only eighteen when I was married.'

A sufficient reply might have been easily made to this by a reference to the result of the union in question, but Evelyn's nature was far too gentle to make use of such an argument. 'Then you were a woman, Mary, and that makes all the difference,' said she. 'I do hope you have never spoken to Bentinck himself in this way?'

'No, miss, not I. But what I say is, where there is Love between two young folks—and plenty besides love to keep them upon afterwards—and especially if the laddie is inclined to be unsteady—it is better that they should be man and wife.'

'Better for one, possibly, although I doubt that, but certainly not for the other,' returned Evelyn decisively. 'I should be exceedingly sorry for any respectable girl who should marry my cousin before he comes to years of discretion.—It is nothing, however, concerning Bentinck that makes my aunt so low-spirited this evening, and be sure you go up to her as soon as you have had your tea.'

Evelyn's face grew very grave as she left the house and took her way along the dusky avenue, as though the mission upon which she was bent had acquired a more serious aspect within the last few minutes.

'If Mary is really encouraging him,' said she to herself, 'it is the more necessary that I should be firm. What would my uncle say, if he did but guess at Bentinck's imprudence, and what effect might it not have upon my unhappy aunt?'

Immersed in thought, she moved mechanically over the well-known ground, always in shade, and sometimes in absolute darkness, until she was presently brought to halt in a narrow lane by the noise of hurrying steps: she was not sure for the moment whether it was man or horse that was coming, and drew under the hedgerow for safety. A man passed by her at full speed, yet not so fast but that she felt sure she recognised her cousin Bentinck.

'He is hastening home, in order that I may not observe his absence,' sighed she. 'I wish he would at least be honest and open with me.' A few steps further, the fresh evening air became laden with

the scent of flowers, whereby she knew better than her sight could tell her, in that full-foliated place, that she was approaching Mr Wilson's garden. The little white gate which shewed itself in the quickset was still in motion, and she easily guessed whose hasty exit had set it swinging. How peaceful the pastor's cottage looked, guarded by its two fair sycamores, and looking down across its open lawn upon the sleeping lake!

Through the unshuttered windows of the little parlour, she could see Mr Wilson bending his white head over the writing-table, and his still fair wife briskly plying her needle. The young May moon would shine that night upon no simpler and more loving pair than they. Their circumstances, through her uncle's influence, were greatly better than they had formerly been, although still very humble; the books, with which the room was plentifully furnished, had been Evelyn's own gift, and the silver reading-lamp, by the light of which the good man was now composing his discourse for the next Sabbath. But the spectatress looked in vain for that which was wont to be the chief ornament of that pleasant room, their daughter, Lucy Wilson, the Flower of Sandalithwaite.

Across the lattice of an upper bedroom window, however, Evelyn saw a shadow which she knew; the substance of it came towards the toilet-table, looked into the mirror, and there delayed, doubtless 'well pleased to find itself so fair,' then placed with care, in a little glass, some object, which the watcher took to be a flower, bent down to kiss it, and then the room was dark. The next moment, Evelyn had turned the handle of the house-door, and met Lucy in the little hall, just as she was about to enter the parlour.

'I want to speak to you, Lucy,' said she in a low grave voice; 'and not before your father and mother.'

'Just as you please, Evelyn,' returned the other petulantly. 'How you frightened me, coming upon one all of a sudden and in the dark!'

'No; just as you please, Lucy,' replied Evelyn with quiet firmness. 'It is to spare you that I ask to speak with you in private; for my own part, I am ready, and would much prefer to say what I have to say in yonder room.'

The tone in which she spoke was almost motherly in its patient tenderness; and yet the pair might well have been taken for sisters, with no great span of time between them; for Evelyn was very young-looking for her time of life, and Lucy was so womanly for her tender years, that the one might have been two-and-twenty, and the other just of age. The sedate and thoughtful expression of the elder contrasted, however, strongly enough with the other's eager but indecisive face, with its delicate colour ebbing and flowing with every change of thought, and its tender, assenting, almond-shaped eyes.

'Let us go into the garden then,' returned Lucy; 'not that I have anything to be ashamed of, Evelyn, whatever it is that you may have to say.'

'God forbid, dear Lucy. I never supposed that you wished to break your father's heart. There he is, look you, and your mother too! Let us sit upon this bench, whence we can see them. What do you think he would say—what would he feel, if he knew that his only daughter gave clandestine interviews to a young man, whom she knows can never marry her?'

'Eavesdropper!' cried Lucy, starting passionately

from her seat; 'it is *you* who ought to be ashamed of yourself.'

'Hush, hush; you know me better, dear girl, than to think that. I came here, it is true, this evening to have some serious talk with you about my cousin; but I never dreamed that matters had gone so far between you. I met him just now running down the hill, like a thief in the night. Yes, I say a thief, and he came to steal what is far more precious to you than gold—your good name, Lucy Wilson.'

'How dare you talk to me like that, Miss Sefton?' sobbed Lucy angrily, 'and to speak so ill of your own cousin, too!'

'I dare talk thus because I love you, Lucy, and I dare speak thus of Bentinck Woodford because I know him,' answered Evelyn firmly. 'When I look upon your fair face, I cannot blame him for having fallen in love with it, but it is very base of him to have told you so. If he were an impulsive lad, who would give up home and friends, and all present comfort, for your sake, I could forgive him; but that is not his character. If he had the boldness to say to his father: "My heart is fixed upon Lucy Wilson, and I mean to marry her," there would be something to admire even in his undutifulness; but he has no such courage. He will never marry you without his father's consent, Lucy; and while Ernest Woodford lives, that consent will never be given.'

'We are young, and we can wait,' cried Lucy, dropping her eyelids.

'Did Bentinck propose waiting?' returned Evelyn gravely. 'O Lucy, Lucy, there can be no great distance of time ere that gray head in yonder room is laid in the churchyard, but beware how you shorten it by your own act! It is not my place, I know—it is your mother's place—to speak to you thus, dear girl: but she does not guess what I know. Like your good father—nay, like your innocent self—she does not dream of harm.'

'And there is no harm!' exclaimed Lucy passionately. 'I will not submit to such injurious things. I will not listen to another word, Miss Sefton.'

'Perhaps it is better so,' said Evelyn thoughtfully. 'I will go in at once, and speak to your parents.'

'They will not believe you,' returned the young girl vehemently.

'They will not believe me, Lucy!' echoed Evelyn with astonishment. 'What, then, are you conscious of having committed a folly—to call it by the mildest name—so great that your father and mother would never credit it! Then, if they will not listen to me, I know who will; I will go straight to my uncle, as I ought to have done long ago, perhaps.'

'O Evelyn, Evelyn, for Heaven's sake, do not do that!' cried Lucy, clasping her hands. 'You do not know how angry Bentinck will be; he will think I told you that he was here to-night.'

'Are you then afraid of him, Lucy?' answered Evelyn gravely. 'If so, you should thank Heaven, girl, that you can never be his wife. His anger cannot hurt you *now*.'

'But you will hurt him. Remember how hardly his father thinks of him already. O spare him, spare him, Evelyn, for my sake!'

'It is for your sake that I dare not spare him, Lucy, although God knows I would do so if I

could. I have stood between him and my uncle's wrath a hundred times: you know I have.'

'But if he promises never to come hither again without your leave!'

'He did promise that, Lucy, not a week ago, and he has broken his word to me, as he will one day break it with you. There is no truth, alas, in Bentinck Woodford—none.'

'But if I promise, Evelyn? If I solemnly declare that he shall have no private interview with me, henceforth; that unless his father consents—well, unless some change in his circumstances shall arise which should make our union possible, we shall be but as brother and sister, mere acquaintances, if you will have it so—but do not tell Mr Woodford, for mercy's sake.' Rising from the bench beneath the sycamore, on which they both were sitting, Lucy threw herself on her knees before her friend with streaming eyes.

Evelyn gently raised her, and folded her in her arms like a penitent child. 'Yet this once more, I will not tell my uncle,' answered she. 'I feel that I am weak to thus give way, but I put trust in your plighted word, Lucy. I hope, I pray you may not deceive me. If you do'—

'I won't, I won't!' interrupted Lucy passionately; 'my dear, kind Evelyn, I never, never will!'

'If you do,' continued the other with solemnity, 'you will repent it as never woman did.—See! your father has done his writing, and will be presently asking for his darling. For seventy years, that man has walked with God, Lucy; beware, lest any conduct of yours make him imagine that God has abandoned him in his old age. I am older than you, Lucy; I have not lived among simple, guileless folk, as you have. I have heard things—and know them to be true—of Bentinck Woodford that I must not tell you, but which make me shudder when I think of his coming here to-night. I blush to have to say such things of my own flesh and blood; but these lips are honest ones, dear girl; the last which pressed your cheek were false and selfish. God bless and guard you, Lucy!'

Not trusting herself to stay another moment, lest she should say too much, yet fearing that she had left something unsaid where argument was so necessary to be urged, Evelyn tore herself away from the half-fainting girl, and hastened home. How fortunate it was that she had chosen that evening to give the warning she had long felt to be necessary, but which, with natural reluctance, she had delayed to offer. By hints alone, which Lucy had persisted in ignoring, had she hitherto endeavoured to awaken the simple girl to the danger of encouraging the attentions of her reckless cousin; but to Bentinck himself she had spoken plainly, weeks ago. He had answered, bluntly enough, that he was not such a fool—not so blind, that is, to the disadvantages of such a union—as to think of making Lucy Wilson his wife; that a little flirtation was all that he proposed to himself; and where was the harm of that, he would like to know! In vain Evelyn pointed out to him the wrong he was doing in thus trifling with the affections of one even more childlike in experience of the world than she was in years. He had replied with levity, nay, almost with brutality, to her appeal. As she listened to him, the recollection of the village gossip, which had invaded her ears of late, respecting the young man's conduct, involuntarily recurred to her mind, and seemed to freeze her blood. Was it possible that this mere lad could be the selfish reprobate

which report had painted him? Sooner or later, the Vicious, she had read, will always become Heartless; but it had seemed incredible that one so young as her cousin should already be in that condition. With just indignation, she threatened that, if he continued to pay his addresses to the curate's daughter, she would disclose the matter to her uncle; and then he changed his tone. He protested that nothing had passed between him and Lucy of a serious sort, and that for the future he would avoid Gable End altogether. He passed his word as a gentleman, and Evelyn had believed him, in spite of several former occasions on which he had proved unworthy of credit; and now he had had a clandestine interview with Lucy that very evening, which was probably not the first by many.

Evelyn's heart was heavy with thought ere she reached the Hall. The gentlemen, she was told, had had coffee in the smoking-room, and would not take tea. She repaired, therefore, not to the drawing-room, but to her aunt's boudoir, where Mary Ripson was sitting with the same enthralling volume in her hand, for she was not a rapid reader. Mrs Woodford was on the sofa, as she had left her, but the embroidery-frame lay on the table beside her, and she was fast asleep. Evelyn stole quietly to her side, and stooped down as though to kiss her cheek; then turned a glance, half-sorrowful, half-expostulatory, upon the student of romance. 'Yes, miss, she *would* do it,' whispered Mary in answer to her look. 'I know it's bad for her, but what could I do? and besides, it really seems to be her only comfort, poor lady.'

'What a dreadful house this is!' murmured Evelyn to herself; but Mary's sharp ears caught her words. 'Dreadful, miss? Lor bless me, why should that be? Missus is not very strong, that's all, and wants something to soothe her.'

Evelyn made no reply, but going into her own apartment, threw up the window to its full height, and sat there with anguished face, drinking in the cool night-air: the atmosphere of the room from which she had just come was heavy with the fumes of Opium.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—TUTOR AND PUPIL.

The amount of education—in the sense of learning—that can be imparted to an ignorant young gentleman of eighteen, who considers himself old enough to be his own master, and who hates a book as a dog hates a stick, is very small. In the case of Bentinck Woodford, the foundations of whose scanty knowledge had been laid in a neighbouring grammar-school, where the son of the Squire of Sandalwaite was treated with the respect he did not merit, it was infinitesimal. After two or three attempts, of a most resolute character, to relieve the fortress of his pupil's mind—besieged by all the powers of Idleness—Valentine Blake desisted from such forlorn-hopes altogether. If the garrison rejected his supplies, it was clearly no use to strive to provision it; and although he still daily threw in a few handfuls of mental food, it was rather to save his own conscience than with any hope of a beneficial result. He resolved to try to do his duty to his charge by other means, namely, by working upon his better nature. However bad may be our dispositions, they are at least made up of materials, some of which are less objectionable than others; and it was these negative advantages which Valentine endeavoured to turn to good account.

In place of study, he substituted conversation, for although Bentinck was stubborn and antagonistic to an incredible degree, he judged that the lad would submit to be talked to, and even to vouchsafe replies when desired to do so, in consideration of his exemption from what he disliked still more. When the tutor confessed to Mr Woodford the failure of his first efforts with his son, and explained to him the new system which he was about to put in action, his employer at once answered that the scheme was futile. 'You don't know that fellow, Ben, sir: he is as obstinate as a string of overloaded mules. He will never open his mouth, nor even his ears, for that matter—that is, if he entertains the least suspicion that you are trying to improve his mind. But, if you can get him to imagine that he is wasting his time, or, still better, getting an advantage over you, by wasting it, without your being aware of the fact, then he will listen to whatever you may have to say. Now, there's my niece, Evelyn—the only woman with a grain of sense, who is not a Tartar, that I ever met in with—she is the person to help us here. If my son is influenced by anything besides beer and tobacco—Now, don't pretend to be shocked, Mr Blake, or I shall begin to have my suspicions that you are not so honest as I take you for. You must know what Bentinck is by this time, yourself; and do you expect that I, who have seen these many years into what sort of hands the great Woodford estate will one day pass, should be mealy-mouthed in speaking of the matter?'

'But still, Mr Woodford, he is your son,' said Valentine, not without a touch of pity.

'You need not remind me of that, sir,' answered the Black Squire passionately, and beginning that wild-beast walk of his up and down the room. 'I swear to you that there are times when I almost wish that I had never been burdened with such an offspring. What have I done to deserve that all I and my father before me have built up with such sagacity and prudence should revert to one who will dissipate our garnered wealth in a few years of riot? He will do it, sir, I know he will do it—curse him!' screamed the old man, clenching his thin fingers, as though he were indeed calling down some malediction upon his degenerate boy.

'You were speaking of Miss Sefton,' interrupted Valentine, anxious to put a stop to so sad a scene.

'I was *thinking* of her, at all events,' continued Mr Woodford with angry vehemence. 'Look you, I had rather make that girl, my niece—the child of one I had little or no regard for—the heir of all I have to leave, than my own son. And I would do it, too—I would, by Heaven—if there were no Selina Murphy in the world to jeer and flout at me. I see her watching me with greedy eyes for something for her brat. But not so much as a bone shall the dog have, sir, from my table. It is that knowledge alone which gives me comfort. For seventeen years and more, I have heard no word of her: when I wrote to her of Bentinck's birth, she made no reply; but she is not one—not she—to sit down content with what Fate has given her. When I think of her, sir, my son grows dear to me; for while he lives, Claude Woodford Murphy—Woodford, forsooth, she named him, counting her chicken safe ere mine was hatched—will be the beggar that his father was before him.'

So violent was the old man's hate and passion, that he never looked towards his companion, but

poured forth his denunciation against its unconscious objects, as though he were alone.

Valentine had to touch his arm as though by accident, as he walked swiftly to and fro, to bring the Black Squire to the consciousness that he was in the presence of his son's tutor.

'You were saying, sir, that you thought Miss Evelyn could assist us in the plan which we had resolved to adopt with Bentinck.'

'Yes, yes,' returned Mr Woodford with impatient irritation: 'if anything can be done with him, Evelyn can do it. You may tell her, from me, that I wish her to give you every help.'

Whereat the tutor, with a grave bow, departed, and left the unhappy old man to resume the thread of his bitter thoughts alone.

Thus, a companionship which would have been wearisome enough to Valentine, became very pleasurable, since Evelyn Sefton shared it. She was accustomed, after her domestic duties were over, to enter the pupil-room upon some pretence of a missing book, or a mislaid letter of her uncle's, and then the unfruitful studies of the morning would be suspended, and the improvement of the unsuspecting Bentinck's mind would be proceeded with in a new direction. To draw the obtuse lad out, was about as easy as to draw a badger; he would sit at meals for a week, and never open his mouth, except for the purpose of filling it and of mastication. Without a grain of imagination, the young fellow seemed always self-involved and pre-occupied (as very dull folks often do), save for an occasional malevolent glance directed towards his male parent, whom he feared and hated in about equal proportions. But in the pupil-room the lad was a little more at ease, and whether from the reason which his father had so disparagingly suggested, or not, he not only appeared to listen with some interest to what was said, but even took some part (though chiefly by ejaculations and expressions of incredulity, it is true) in the conversations. What was found to please him best was Valentine's adventures in South America, with their incidents of war and peril; and in spite of his contempt upon the first occasion when Giuseppe's name was mentioned, he was forced to confess that, if what was told of him was true, this friend of Mr Blake's must be a fine fellow. 'A deuced sight better,' he was so good as to remark upon one occasion, 'than any other of his countrymen, such as Julius Cesar, or Alexander the Great (it was no use correcting him in little local discrepancies), about whom there used to be such a fuss made at Hawkstone Grammar-school.'

'I agree with you there, Bentinck,' remarked his tutor approvingly, 'for Cesar and Alexander only served their own ends, whereas Giuseppe had always in view the interests of others.'

If Mr Murphy had been present, he would doubtless have observed to himself that the last remark was a speech for the Gallery; and certainly it made more impression upon Evelyn than on the person to whom it was addressed. But, nevertheless, Valentine obtained this much with his pupil, that he was able to reprove him indirectly for the vicious principles or weak opinions to which he occasionally gave utterance, by an anecdote of how this fine fellow Giuseppe had acted under circumstances which were apposite to the case in point. 'If you are a better or a braver fellow than he, Bentinck, then you are right, and he is wrong, but not otherwise;' and this sometimes evoked a

retraction of opinion, which no amount of argument would have compelled. Thus, upon one occasion, when the disrespectful youth happened casually to refer to Mrs Woodford as 'the old woman,' Valentine took up his parable as follows.

'You are doing very wrong, Bentinck, to speak of your mother in such terms; for myself, I was so unhappy as to lose that parent in my infancy, and I consider it the greatest misfortune of my life. Giuseppe used to say that no man who did not love his own mother, and treat her with reverence, was worthy of any regard. He attributed all the good feeling that might be in his nature to her alone, just as you might feel indebted to your ancestors for house and land; and he has declared to me that in the most terrible passages of his life, in the moment of shipwreck, or when the bullets were singing about his ears like hail, he has never felt the touch of fear, since he was sure that his mother was praying for him, and that God must needs listen to one so good and pious.'

'Ay, that's all a woman can do is to pray,' observed the young gentleman scornfully; who, although he did not possess the intelligence of Voltaire, unconsciously entertained the same opinions upon religious matters.

'If that were even so, Bentinck, it would be a good deal,' remarked his tutor gravely; 'but women can do more than pray, when it is necessary. For one thing, they are braver than men, when their pity or affection is aroused, in daring the displeasure of the powerful. I should not be alive this day but for the heroism of one of that sex whom you so unreasonably despise. It was when Giuseppe and I were seized and thrown into prison while endeavouring to escape from Galeguay. You have seen these red lines round my wrists—they are the marks of the bracelets of the Spanish governor. My hands were fastened behind my back, and then I was made to hang by them to a rope from the ceiling. My chest seemed to be forced inward upon the heart and lungs, my arms to be wrenched from the sockets, and from beneath the nails of my swollen fingers the blood began to ooze— But I beg your pardon, Miss Evelyn; I am afraid I shock you with such horrors.'

'Nay, Mr Blake; if you have borne them, I can surely bear to listen to the recital,' answered Evelyn with heightened colour.

'Yes, yes; I like this,' urged Bentinck excitedly: 'it is as good as *The Lives of the Highwaymen and Robbers*.' And this was high praise, for the volume in question was the only one which even his foster-mother, Mary Ripson, had been able to convince the young fellow was worth reading.

'Giuseppe, however, suffered worse than I,' continued Valentine modestly. 'While similarly bound, he was let fall twice or thrice by means of a pulley, whereby his bones were dislocated. Then after such a quarter of an hour as seemed a lifetime of torment, the governor entered the cell in which we hung. "If you will give up the names of those who helped you in your attempt to escape," said he to Giuseppe, "you shall be let down." Never shall I forget the disdainful smile with which that face (which you have seen pictured in its quiet majesty) lifted itself up with pain and difficulty, and gave its silent answer. The cowardly tyrant felt it like a stab, and left the room. For my own part, I soon fainted with the extremity of the pain; but Giuseppe was not so fortunate; it was two hours before his iron nerves gave way, and

he became unconscious. We suffered more than that in Galeguay; but in the end we escaped, thanks to a noble lady, who dared the governor's vengeance, when no man was found to do so. If I had known her only, it would have been enough to convince me how great is woman's courage. But I have known many such. At Laguna, when the little republican flotilla of Rio Grande was driven on shore by the Brazilian fleet, and it was necessary to land our handful of men in hottest haste, the last person, save one, to reach the shore was a woman. Herself and her husband, with their own hands, set fire to the three vessels, by that time mere slaughter-houses, so terribly had we suffered from the enemy's shot; and by the light of the flames which they themselves had kindled, they made their way to land in a small boat.

'And who was this heroic woman,' inquired Evelyn, 'who was so worthy of her husband?'

'It was Giuseppe's wife,' answered Valentine. 'He had married her only a little time before, and their very honeymoon was passed in camp. He was our general and admiral in one at that time, and she was his right hand: we adored her almost as we did himself.—You have heard of the retreat from Moscow, Bentinck—a terrible history indeed, but there it was almost solely men who suffered. I have seen a retreat worse than that, where women and children had to march night and day through a dense and tangled forest. It was on the march from Euena-Vista to Lages, and the forest was called Las Antas. Our provisions were very scanty, the rain was incessant, and not a mile was passed without some unhappy child or woman sinking under the fatigue. The cavalry ate their horses, but a few good men saved theirs, in order to take up before them one of the poor little creatures whose mothers had already perished. Giuseppe carried his own child of three months old suspended round his neck by a shawl, and endeavoured to keep life and warmth within him by breathing on the poor babe as it shivered in its ineffectual cradle.— But I think we have breakfasted full enough of horrors for this morning, Bentinck,' said Valentine, interrupting himself with effort. 'See; it is fine now, and after the rain, the fish will bite; let us take the boat, and go a-fishing.'

'I have broken the rods,' returned his pupil sullenly; 'and although Evelyn has one locked up somewhere, she will not lend it me.—But tell me, did you ever manage to pay out that governor of Galeguay for what he did to you?'

'Yes, Bentinck. The whirligig of time generally manages, during warfare, to bring about our revenges. After the battle of San Antonio, that very man fell into our hands, and was brought as a prisoner before Giuseppe. He trembled in every limb: none but a tyrant could have exhibited such an extremity of cowardice.'

'And I hope you tied his wrists and jerked him well before you hung him?' observed Bentinck eagerly.

'No; there was no end to serve by punishing the craven wretch; so Giuseppe, who never revenged his private wrongs, ordered him to be set at liberty. "The punishment of fear upon meeting me," said he smiling, "was severe enough, I fancy."

The conversation for that morning ended; and tutor and pupil betook themselves to the lake, as the former had proposed; but as they were crossing the lawn towards the boat-house, Evelyn called out to them from the house to stay a moment. Then

hastening after them, she gave into Valentine's hands a rod and line, saying: 'This is my Cousin Charlie's rod, Mr Blake, and has never been used since his death; but I think I am right in lending it to you.'

CAPGRAVE'S CHRONICLE.

A FEW years ago, the government took a step so evidently worthy of approval, that it must be a great source of regret to all who will give the matter consideration that it should have met with so little encouragement. We refer to the publication, under state supervision, of the rare records of national importance now entombed in our university libraries, our museums, and the muniment-chests of the older cities and boroughs—a task which could never tempt private speculation, and too expensive for the undertaking of private philanthropy.

One of the first records thus given to the public by government interference was the Chronicle of John Capgrave, a short notice of which cannot fail to be interesting to the general reader. The production of a Roman Catholic ecclesiastic, it is yet so full of internal recommendation, so entirely expressive of true English feeling, that it leads us to consider that our forefathers were not the foolish, subservient, and superstitious people we are apt to think them; that there were many beneficial results and redeeming traits in the dominance of the old worship; and it corrects the prevalent notion that the Roman Catholic edifices of old were the abodes of those who represented a foreign faith, foreign power, and hostility to English freedom. We learn to look upon the priests and monks of the old time, in the main, as men of the people, Englishmen in all their tendencies, as liberal in their views, as stern in their defence of national freedom, and as deeply imbued with love of the old land as any of the men of their time.

John Capgrave, a monk of Lynn, was born therein at the close of Richard II.'s reign, and died in the early part of the reign of Edward IV. He entered the priesthood at the age of twenty-four, became distinguished by his learning and writings (though the latter were then comparatively little known, and are now obsolete or extinct), and died at the place of his birth at the age of seventy. His Chronicle was written in the last years of his life; and in his preface, speaking of his failing powers, he explains that 'it pleased as a solace to gader a short remembrauns of elde stories, that whanne I loke upon hem and have a short touch of the writing, I can sone dilate the circumstances.' He dedicates his 'abbrevicion of chronicles' to the then new king, Edward IV.; and the independent and dignified style he adopts at once impresses us with respect for the venerable writer, content there to style himself a 'poor frere.' No 'most high and mighty,' no 'most dread sovereign,' or 'bright occidental star,' or 'your highness,' or 'your hopeful seed,' but a plain piece of worthy paternal advice—among other things, to make these three 'binaries,' or double resolutions: 'As for the first, think that ze be made of to natures—bodi and soule. Loke that zoure soule have evyr the soverynyte, and that the bestral meying of the body oppres not the soule.' Second: 'That there be to weyes in this world, on to lyf, anothir to deth. That wey that ledith to everlastyng lyf, thouz it be streite, kepe it. Though men that runne

the large weye clepe hem ageyn by zoure power.' Third: 'The love of God and love of zoure neyboure;' and on this topic, as on the other two, some suitable comments and admonitions follow. We must explain that the Chronicle, though beginning at the earliest date, treats almost entirely of the events which occurred in England from the latter part of Edward III.'s reign to the reign of Henry V., a period of about fifty years, ending about the same number of years before the death of the chronicler.

As an ecclesiastic, Capgrave of course dwells with some minuteness on a matter of such importance as the church affairs; but whilst upholding their dignity, it is pleasing to notice the spirit of freedom which is manifested, and the national characteristics of the writer. One of his first references to the subject reveals his doubts as to the papal infallibility. In his notes on the year 1251, he speaks thus of the famous Groteste, Bishop of Lincoln: 'And this same Bischop Robert wrot and seid ageyn the pope, and at Rome, in his presens, appeled fro him to the hy kyng of Hevene. So cam he hom and deied, and in his deth he appered to the pope, and smet him on the side with the pike of his crosse-staf, and seid this: "Rise, wrech, and com to thi dom" [a rather irreverential way of accosting the Holy Father]. 'This wordis herd the cubiculeris' [chamberlains], 'and the strok was seyn in his side, for he deied anon after that.' But he seems to go further when he quaintly records the shame of the papacy in his mention of the proceedings of the avaricious pontiff in 1402: 'In this tyme cam oute a bulle fro the court' [of Rome], 'wech revokid alle the graces that had be graunted many zeres before, of wech ros mech slaunder and obliqui ageyn the chereh, for thei seid pleynly that it was no more trost to the pope writing *than to a dogges tail wagging*, for as aft as he wold gader mony, so oftyn wold he annullen eld graces, and graunt newe.'

But though Capgrave is liberal, and sometimes even radical, in his Romanism, he displays great anxiety as to the influence and emoluments of the church, and relates, apparently with distinguished approval, the daring of the Bishop of London, who rudely corrected the favourite, De la Pole, in the presence of King Richard. The style of address is amusingly characteristic of the period: 'Hold thi pees, thou Michael. It becometh the rite wel to sey swech wordis, thou that art dampned for thi falsheid booth be the Lordis and be the parlement.' The doings of a prelate even more courageous are dilated upon at rather unusual length. We are told that, in 1402, the king (Henry IV.) proposed to ride from the north into 'Walis,' but his lettyng was that he failed money, and therefore certeyn knytes counceiled the kyng that the bischoppis which were about him schuld be pryved of hors, and harneys, and tresoure' [treasure], and this schuld be gove to hem that laboured with the kyng. This [outrageous proposition of the sceptical knights] 'herd the Bischop' [Archbishop] 'of Caunterbery, and seide: "Trewly, there is no knyte with the kyng that beginne ones for to spoile any brother of myn, but he schal for his spoilyng have as good knokkis" [knocks] "as evyr had Englishman." We are pleased to learn that the valorous archbishop was not required to prove the sincerity of his threat. Capgrave introduces us to the old English parliament, where an animated debate, on the budget of 1403, is going

on. The demand for supplies, occasioned by the insurrection of the year before, is so great that the speaker alleges that 'swech summes myte not be rered so oft in the puple but if the chereh shuld be put fro' her temporalties.' This, of course, brings up the faithful archbishop: 'Now se I weel whidir thi malice *walkith*. Thou renegade and apostata of thyn order' [he had held office in the church previously, and had 'without dispensacionne aspired to the order of wedlock, and eke the degre of knythod'], 'woldest put the chereh al undir fote. But whil this hed stant on this body, thou schal nevyr have thi entent;' &c. And we learn that the archbishop eventually gained the king on his side, and subdued the renegade parliament, for 'ther eke was graunted swech a task as had nevyr be herd,' but 'upon condicion that there shuld no memorial wrytng be left of it.' The Commons, however, seem to have been tolerably independent in those times, for we are told that, in 1388, when the king wrote to the sheriffs, commanding them to return only his nominees, the parliament demurred, asserting 'ful scharply that the usage had be that the Comones schuld chese thi knytes and these burgeises.'

We can almost pardon Capgrave's energetic denunciation of heresy on account of his evident sincerity, but it seems hardly fair that such rational and sensible doctrines as the following should call forth from him, in respect of 'on Jon Wiclef, Maystir of Oxenforth,' the condemnation of these expressive epithets: 'The orgon of the deyvil, the enemy of the chereh, the confusion of men, the ydol of heresie, the meroure of ypcrisie, and the norischer of scisme.' These were some of the Reformer's tenets: 'That the chereh of Rome is not hed of alle cherehis. That Peter had no more auctorite than the othir aposteles, ne the pope no more power than anothir prest. That temporal lordes may tak away the godes fro the chereh whan thei be persanes traspasin; and that no reules mad be Augustin, Benet, and Fraunceys adde no more perfeccion ovir the gospel than doth lym whiting onto a wal. That bischoppis schuld have no prisones. That this bred' [of the sacrament] 'was no better than othir bred, save only for the prestis blessing; and if Christis bodi was there, it was possibel to a man for breke Christis nek. He seid eke it was lesse synne to worship a tode than the sacrament, for the tode hath lyf, and the sacrament non.' Yet Capgrave religiously believes that when Wicliffe died, 'being smet with a horibil paralsie,' it was 'be the rithful dome of God.' He laments deeply the audacity of Wicliffe's followers 'in taking upon hem to sacre' [consecrate] 'prestis;' and that 'the bischoppis of this lond *saide right nonet* to this mater, but kepte h-am in her houses, and opened no mouth to berk' [bark] 'ageyn these erroneus doggis.' After this exhibition of sensitiveness on the part of our author, we cannot be surprised that when, in 1394, 'the Lolardis set up scrowis' [scrolls] 'at Westminster and at Poules' [St Paul's] 'with abominable accusaciones of hem that long to the chereh,' he should exult that 'the kyng, whan he had conceived the malice of these men, he cleped hem to his presens, and snybbed' [snubbed] 'hem.'

We have a record of the martyrdom of 'a smyth,' who was burned in Smithfield in 1409, for holding 'that the sacrament of the auter is not Christis bodi, but a thing withoute soule;' how, 'whan he wold not renouns his opinion, he was tak to the seculere

hand; how 'Prince Herry had pite on the man, and commanded to withdraw the fire, and behite' [promised] 'him grete things, but it wold not be. Wherefor he suffered him to be brent and into arches.' This 'pite' is certainly a pleasing trait in the character of the then dissolute prince, the subsequent hero of Agincourt.

It will be seen, from the quotations made here, that the principal part of the Chronicle relates to events which occurred in the author's lifetime, or immediately preceding his birth. His information and opinion, therefore, are of considerable value. We find him to be strongly in favour of the rule which followed the dethronement of Richard II.; and the representations which are made of the character of that monarch, must deprive him of much of the sympathy which his wretched end, and the commiserating regards of our great dramatic bard, have obtained for him.

We are told that 'he purveyed mech thing of his legis, and payed rite note, so that ny alle men hated him;' how he 'borrowed more good of dyvers men, and bond him be patent letteris to pay hem at certeyn dates, which he never payed;' how 'though men that were counted riche were bore on hand, that thei had consented to the tretouris that were ded, and so were thei compelled grete summa.' 'Every person of what degre he was, if thei had seid any word in derogacion of the kyng, there was no mercy but payment or prison; and this mad the puple to hate the kyng.' Most pathetic is the description of the execution of the Earl of Arundel in 1396 by Richard's order, and of the king's terrors afterwards; how he was tormented with dreadful dreams, and was ever under the impression that the shadow of a man walked before him; how he grieved when the common people called the duke a martyr; and how, when it was reported that his head had grown again to his body, the corpse was disinterred, and the grave despoiled, and left desolate. We regret that our space will not permit a quotation at length of the Chronicle on this subject.

Matters purely of a domestic nature, beyond notice of great lightnings, severe winters, and long-continued drought, the appearance of meteors, and the occurrence of supernatural portents, are but little referred to. Ireland is mentioned several times. It is called more than once 'that wilde lond;' and it is somewhat singular that, in 1393, only part of the country is mentioned to belong to the king of England, the rest being stated to be inhabited by the 'wilde Erisch.'

But perhaps the most pleasing notices of all are those which relate to the prowess and conquests of England. It is in speaking of these, with the pride and enthusiasm of one who has a kindred interest in their glory, that we see the national fidelity of the old priest, and recognise him not as the servant of the papacy, but as the true-hearted, honest Englishman, whom we can think of with complacency as representing our countrymen of old. Strange and interesting memorials we have of British character and adventures in the wars with France, to which the chronicler seems to think we were continually directed by a superior power. So we are informed of the comet, whose beams were towards France; of the fair weather that favoured the invading navies of Britain, and the storms that continually interrupted their return; and of the providential escapes and sustenance which preserved the English adventurers.

One of the most early references to these wars is the mention of Edward the Black Prince, and an account of his return to London with the king of France and his nobles prisoners. We learn that 'whann he cam to London, there was so much prees of puple, that whann he was at the bregge' [London Bridge], 'at nyne befor non, it was on afternon or he myte come to Westminster.' Capgrave's idea of the value of the prince's services seems to be great, for he says: 'His deth bare away al the sikernes' [security] 'of this lond.' Bright memorials has he afterwards, however, to record before the glorious Agincourt. He tells how, in 1403, the Bretons, under the Lord of Castel, invaded England, and burned the town of Plymouth. 'And whann thei cam ham to Bretayne, a eld man of the same lond met with hem, and sayde unto hem: "Beware of the taye" [reckoning]; "trost verily the Englishmen wil not leve this mater thus." And sone after, Bretayne repented her dede,' for William Wilforth and his navy returned the visit of the invaders, and sorely proved to them the truth of their sage's predictions. Nevertheless, this Castel afterwards 'londed at Dartmouth with grete pride, and of hem of whom he had ful gret indignacion, that is to sey the rural puple, was he slain.' A significant proof that the lower classes of those days even were not indifferent to despotic and contemptuous treatment.

Another instance of the national courage is recorded in 1416. The Earl of Dorset, after invading France, was forced to retreat before the superior forces of Armagnac. 'Thei' [the English] 'laboured al the Thursday, and on Friday in the morowning thei sey the Frenschmen on the hillis comyng downward. Then sent to the Erl of Dorset this message the Erl Armenak: "Now art thou so streytid that the se is on the o' side, and we on the othir; therefor be my councele, zeld the, for ellis schalt thou deye." The Erl of Dorset sent this answer ageyn: "It was nevyr the maner of Englishmen to zelde hem whann thei myte fite;" and thouz the English host had no men but XV hundred, zet had thei better of XV thousand, God and good prayeris hem helping.'

This comparison of numbers certainly looks a little too astounding for implicit credence; but the English daring exhibited in the duke's reply we can comprehend, as easily as the bearing of the king of England in 1338 (reported by Capgrave), who, when he 'went ovyr the se to help the Duk of Braban to his rite,' and visited the Duke of Bavaria, created 'gret wonder of the emperoure men that the kyng of Ynglande kissed no this feet.'

We must conclude by one more extract, which refers to the boldness of the men of the Isle of Wight in 1403. If the people of the island in their annals have now got no note of a matter of such apparent insignificance, surely they ought to be proud to find it brought to light with a worthy place in these buried chronicles of England, and we of 'these degenerate days' may be pleased with almost equal pride, recognising in the brave Islesmen of those days our courageous ancestry.

'In this same tyn, the Frenschmen cam to the Yld of Wite, asking tribute of the dwellers to the sustenauns of Quene Ysabelle. And thei of Wite answered that King Richard was ded, and the quene pesably sent hom, wherefor thei wold not pay. If thei cam for to fite, thei schuld be

welkom; and thei schuld give hem leve to entyr the lond, and rest hem III dayes befor the batayle.'

The quiet way in which the anecdote is concluded is amusing: 'The Frenschmen herd this answer, and sayled fro that cuntree.'

We quit our reference to this very interesting book, one of the most pleasing, though perhaps the least known of the many Chronicles from which our country's history in a later age has been compiled, with the conviction, that no Englishman, after its perusal, would grudge the government expenditure which has multiplied, in their publication, the only two known manuscripts of a work so valuable.

WILLIAM HOOPER:

A LEFT-LUGGAGE STORY.

Six months ago, I was unexpectedly summoned to town by a letter from my London solicitors, Messrs Smith and Son, on urgent business, the precise nature of which it is unnecessary to specify here. Living as I do some miles from a post-town, I do not get my letters till far into the morning, and it was only by dint of a hard gallop, that I succeeded in reaching the station at Buntford just as the mid-day up-express came steaming in. As I passed the bookstall, I called out for a copy of the day's *Times*, but was answered by a gaping boy that he had none—not in yet, or all out—I forget which. Being pressed for time, and moreover haunted by a vague dread of the five dreary unoccupied hours before me, I, with less than my usual discretion, flung down a shilling on the counter, and having caught up at random the first of the row of monthly magazines that came to hand, hastened to secure my seat in a first-class carriage. The compartment in which I found myself was empty, but it seemed that I was not long to have it to myself; for the opposite seat—I had taken one next to the window, with my back to the engine—was occupied by a gentleman's hat-box and railway-rug, and a portmanteau was stowed away underneath. The rug—I think I see it before my eyes now—was of a shaggy brown outside, lined with a running pattern of black and blue. The hat-box was labelled '*Wm. Hooper, passenger to London.*'

The comfort of a journey, of a long one especially, depends in so great measure on the nature of one's fellow-travellers, that it is not to be wondered at that my eye dwelt rather long on the name, while I fell into speculations as to its possessor, and whether he would turn out a good, bad, or indifferent companion. Having scanned his luggage well, I proceeded to look out of the window for the man himself, for we were on the point of starting, and it was time he made his appearance. At this moment, there came hurrying up a tall young man with sandy moustache and blue spectacles, carrying a carpet-bag, and an old lady with a dog in her arms. Both looked in at my carriage, and both passed on, the one up, the other down the platform, entering respectively the compartments to the right and left of mine. The only persons now remaining on the platform were the station-master, who was already giving the signal for our departure, two porters, and a bearded man who paced up and down with folded arms. Him I was disposed to set down as Mr Hooper; but if it were he, he shewed a singular indifference to the

fate of his property, for the whistle sounded, and we were off, and he simply stood still and stared carelessly after us.

Plainly, it was not Mr Hooper. But where, then, was the man? It was a question more easily asked than answered. I grew weary at last of watching his luggage, and turned my attention to the magazine I had bought at the station. But I could not get on with it at all. Story after story I began, and story after story I abandoned in disgust. I use the word advisedly, for it is with no slighter feeling that common-sense, perhaps common-place, men like myself can regard the tone that at present pervades this class of literature. At last, I hit upon one tale that promised to be sensible enough, setting out as it did with an account of the journey on foot of a father and son from Land's End to John o' Groat's House. But it was a mere deception after all. No further on than the third page, they lost their way in a wood, and took shelter in a small wayside inn, the Boots whereof was an individual so ominously described that it needed no large amount of discrimination to perceive that this story was going the way of all the others. Thoroughly out of patience, and apostrophising myself as a double ass for having thrown away a shilling on such rubbish, I tossed the offending book to the further end of the carriage. 'How on earth,' I said to myself, 'can trash like this go down in this work-a-day world? and where do they find writers weak-minded enough to minister to so silly a taste?' Then, my eye falling on the luggage opposite, I continued: 'They represent every trivial incident as tending to something of great moment. Something comes out of everything. If one of those wisecracks were here at the present time, he would make something out of that railway-rug, I don't doubt.'

We had whizzed by four or five out-of-the-way stations at express-rate; now we were slackening speed considerably, and presently, bump, bump, we drew up alongside of the platform at the Tamwell Station.

Here we had a stoppage of ten minutes, to enable Northern passengers to lunch; a tedious delay to those who like myself had no better occupation for the time than walking up and down the platform. Among some half-dozen others employed in the same manner, one man in particular attracted my notice. He was below the middle height, broad-shouldered, thick-set, and red-haired. His eyes were small and bright; his face not a pleasant one to look at, conveying as it did a most unmistakable impression of craftiness.

'If I were a policeman,' said I to myself, 'I should keep a sharp look-out on that fellow.'

His movements struck me as peculiar. He walked right down the platform, peering into one carriage after another, as though undecided which to enter. Having arrived at the end of the train, he turned, and came leisurely back towards where I was standing. This time he stopped for a moment at my carriage, and an undefined instinct made me watch him yet more narrowly. He glanced back at me, and for an instant his eyes encountered mine, then he turned his head, and walked on. A sudden idea struck me: Could this by any chance be William Hooper, who, having inadvertently got into a wrong carriage at Buntford, was now come to look after his luggage? But I dismissed the notion immediately; he was so evidently not a first-class passenger. The ringing

of the first bell took off my attention, and I hastened to resume my seat.

'By your leave, sir,' said a voice at my elbow, and there, to my no small astonishment, was the same objectionable individual, actually preparing to enter the carriage.

'Perhaps you are not aware that this is a first-class carriage,' I said, in my haughtiest tone, and not budging an inch to facilitate his entrance.

'Just so, sir,' he replied, with provoking coolness; and he proceeded to push his way in.

'It is William Hooper, was my mental conclusion; but this was negated the next moment.

'I'll thank you to allow me to move your rug and hat-box to the next seat, sir; I wishes to see the last of a friend.'

And, suiting the action to the words, he not only displaced the articles in question, but squeezed his bulky figure out of the window in such a manner as almost to fill up the aperture. It was very annoying; but by remonstrating with a boor, I should, I knew, but expose myself to a disadvantage, so I let him take his way, hoping that when the tickets came to be inspected, he would be sent to the right-about. But I was disappointed. Not only was the ticket he produced as genuinely a first-class one as my own, but the destination thereon marked was the same—Paddington.

'Odious!' I ejaculated to myself as the carriage was locked, and the train off again. 'However, if he makes himself disagreeable, I can but change carriages at the next station.'

I had procured a newspaper at Tamwell, and was busied in its perusal, when looking up suddenly, I caught my companion's eye fixed on me with an expression absolutely startling in its keen scrutiny.

Yet more startling was the immediate and remarkable change that came over his countenance when he saw that he was observed—his eye dropped; a dull, stupid expression overspread his face, and he turned his head away. However, I had seen enough to set me on my guard. After this, I resolved to watch him steadily, though without appearing to do so.

Acting on this resolution, I soon became aware, that, for some reason or other, he took considerable interest in the luggage he believed to be mine; in reality, the property of the invisible William Hooper. At least, so I judged from the circumstance, that although, so long as I looked his way, he apparently took no notice of either hat-box or rug, no sooner did I turn my head towards the window by which we were seated, than I was conscious—I may almost say instinctively—that both were subjected to the sharpest investigation from his foxy eyes.

I had really forgotten the existence of the portmanteau, when a peculiar *thud*, repeated at intervals, roused me to the perception that my companion's heavy heel was from time to time striking with some force against the leather casing. This might have passed for mere clumsiness, had not my suspicions already been excited. As it was, I could not divest myself of the notion, that he had some ulterior object in view, though what it could be was difficult to divine. I could scarcely believe that of sheer malice prepense he could wish to damage the portmanteau. Could he possibly be trying to get some idea of its contents; and if so, what sinister intentions did he entertain with regard to them?

Believing that danger of some description threatened William Hooper's luggage, I resolved—since he was not here in person to protect it—to take it

under my more immediate surveillance; and, the more effectually to do so, not to disclaim that ownership of it, with which my companion evidently accredited me. I therefore said, as civilly as possible: 'You find that portmanteau rather in your way, I am afraid; pray, let me draw it out, and take it under my own seat.'

'Not at all, not at all!' returned my *vis-à-vis* eagerly. 'It's quite comfortable here, sir: don't trouble yourself to move.'

He was evidently as loath to part with the portmanteau as I was anxious to get possession of it; but I was the more determined to carry my point, which I succeeded in doing at last.

Shortly after this, we passed through a tunnel—a long one—in the course of our transit through which, suddenly bethinking me of ascertaining the security of the hat-box, I stretched my hand across for the purpose. I had just touched the encircling strap when my fingers encountered those of another hand; there was a mutual start, and both hands were simultaneously withdrawn. This was a disagreeable confirmation of my suspicion, and at the same time I felt considerably out of countenance myself—my object in feeling must have been so palpable, whereas, after all, the position of his hand was not very unnatural, sitting as he was beside it, with his arm, it might be, on the cushioned partition. Neither of us said a word, and presently we emerged from the tunnel close to Whitworth Station.

Our *tête-à-tête* ended here, and though I am no coward, I must own that I was not sorry for it. The two passengers who joined our party were a white-haired lady, in Quaker costume, who took the vacant seat next me, opposite Mr Hooper's possessions, and an elderly gentleman in an Inverness cape, and wearing a respirator, who seated himself beside them by the other window.

As he appeared to be in delicate health, I ventured to suggest that the seat opposite would be less liable to draught, but he replied that it did not suit him to sit with his back to the engine. I then proposed to move the hat-box and rug, so as to vacate a seat further from the window; but this he also declined, saying he preferred his present seat. So I left him to himself, and he presently dozed off. His sleepiness seemed to infect my opposite neighbour, who, leaning his head on his arm, closed his eyes, and soon began to snore audibly.

My lady-companion alone continued wide awake, and was very chatty and communicative. She appeared to be of a philanthropic turn of mind, and entertained me with accounts of various institutions she had lately been visiting; among others, that of the Whitworth jail. It was at this point in the conversation that a sparkle, as of a wakeful eye appearing just for an instant in the mass of red hair and beard reclining on the seat opposite, both warned me to be on my guard, and suggested the thought: 'If my friend over there is not well acquainted with the inside of that jail, I am very much mistaken.'

I think he must have caught my eye fixed on him, for, from that moment, the snoring gradually ceased; and by and by he began to wake up, in a very natural manner, I must allow. He took no interest in our conversation apparently, for he kept his face turned towards the window, and occupied himself in dotting down with a pencil, in a large pocket-book, sundry marks and lines. One would have almost thought he was sketching, or trying to

do so; rather a novel experiment in a railway carriage, even in this age of utilisation of time.

The Quaker lady evidently adopted this view of the case. 'Thee must excuse me, friend,' she said; 'but the motion of the carriage is surely not favourable to drawing. If thee does not take care, thee will injure thine eyesight permanently.'

'Never fear for my eyesight, ma'am,' was the gruff reply; 'it has held out well enough so far, and is like to do for a good time yet.'

'If a lady takes the trouble to concern herself in your behalf, you might at least be at the pains to give her a civil answer,' I exclaimed, indignant at his brusquerie.

But he gave me no answer but a grim smile, and I felt vexed that I had been betrayed into addressing him. The lady's equanimity was, however, not in the least disturbed, and she quietly resumed the conversation as though nothing had occurred; our companion, meantime—the one who was awake—continuing to divide his attention between the window and his pocket-book.

'I have a little book here concerning the Blind Asylum at Northing I was telling thee about, that it may interest thee to see,' said the Quakeress, taking a pamphlet from her bag.

I put out my hand to receive it, but at that moment my opposite neighbour, by some awkward movement in turning sharply round, jerked my elbow, and it fell to the ground. I will do him the justice to say that he had the civility to stoop down to pick it up; but he bungled stupidly about it, dropping it again two or three times, and when at last he really had it in his hand, retaining it to scan the title-page with evident curiosity, instead of at once restoring it to its owner.

I felt inclined to resent this as impertinence, but the lady took out another pamphlet, saying good-naturedly: 'If thee is interested in the subject, here is another little book for thee.'

'Thank you, ma'am,' he replied, a little more graciously than before. 'Hand it over to the gentleman, if you please, and I will keep this here one.'

He was very much interested in the subject, if one might judge from the earnest attention with which he perused each single page; but it would seem that it was a little beyond his depth—he had not the appearance of being a well-educated man—for he looked up at the end with a peculiarly baffled and puzzled expression. With an odd sort of grunt, he folded the pamphlet into his pocket-book—I thought he might at least have offered to return it—and then set to work with his pencil again.

'It is a good work they are doing there,' remarked the Quakeress; 'one would be glad to forward it all one could.'

A nod was the only reply he vouchsafed.

It was a drowsy day, dull and close. After a while, we relapsed into silence. We stopped at but few stations, and no fresh passengers came in to rouse us. Before long, my three companions all seemed to be dozing, and had it not been for a vague sense of insecurity, I should have followed their example.

Time went on. We were within half an hour of London, and nothing had occurred to ratify my suspicions. The first movement was on the part of the invalid, who, as we neared Chelston, our last stopping-place, roused himself from his slumber, and took down his umbrella from its resting-place above the seat. At the same instant, he of the red hair sat up wide-awake, though but a moment

before he had been, to all appearance, buried in sleep.

The tickets are always given up here, and we were called upon to have them ready. The ticket-collector came round in a hurry as usual, took the four tickets, saw that the door was locked, and was about to move on, when the gentleman in the respirator placed his hand on the door, saying: 'I'm for Chelston—let me out, please.'

The man glanced back at the tickets in his hand, and read out: 'Northsea, Buntford, and Whitworth—all for Paddington, sir.'

'I know,' said the invalid feebly. 'There was some difficulty about booking me through to Chelston, and they told me a Paddington-ticket would do. The advantage, if there is any, is on the Company's side.'

'All right, sir,' and he unlocked the door.

At the mention of *Northsea* being on one of the tickets, my opposite neighbour and I exchanged a momentary glance. I made sure I had discovered one fact about him—namely, that he had been in the train longer even than I had, and had only changed carriages at Tamwell—a circumstance which, I hardly know why, confirmed my belief in his being a suspicious character. As for his face, I confess I could not make out its expression; but he must know now that I suspected him, I thought. At any rate, we both looked a little conscious, I fancy; both turned our heads away, and to shew we were not thinking of anything particular, both began at the same time a low whistle, the effect whereof, tunes and keys being different, may be more easily imagined than described.

The elderly gentleman had, in the meantime, effected his exit, and was on the point of going off down the platform, when my *vis-à-vis* unceremoniously clutched hold of him by the cape. 'I beg pardon, sir; but if you would do me a trifling favour, I should be greatly obliged.'

'If I can serve you in any way, I shall be happy to do so,' returned the other; 'but there is no time to lose—you will be off in another minute.'

I judged from his tone that he was not overwell pleased with the style of address, and no wonder; but the unmannerly fellow did not seem to see it. With a careless: 'That's just why I ask you,' he scribbled a few words on a page of his pocket-book, tore it out, and twisting it up into a sort of note, handed it to the gentleman, saying: 'Will you be so good as to take this to the telegraph-office?—See, the door is over there. Thank you, sir. There's the shilling. Ask 'em to send it off at once, please.' Then, by way of explanation, he added: 'I'm bound to let my mother know I'm coming, you see. It might make her ill if I was to look in on her all of a sudden.'

'I don't see that a telegram will mend matters,' I muttered; but I don't think he heard me, and I did not care that he should.

The old gentleman made his way to the door indicated. We were off before he reappeared.

I began now seriously to consider what steps it would be well to take with regard to William Hooper's luggage on reaching Paddington, to which we were drawing very near. If, as seemed the most natural and straightforward course, I went off to the superintendent at once to acquaint him with the circumstances, I should have, meantime, to leave it to the mercy of my red-haired friend, who had already interested himself so much concerning it. And yet, what other course was open to me?

I was still quite at sea as to what plan to adopt, when we rushed shrieking into that Babel of sights and sounds, the Paddington Station. It was more than a year since I was there last, and it seemed to me more bustling than ever. Not that I could see much, however, for my friend opposite quite monopolised the window. I regretted it the less, that I now hastily made up my mind—no better course suggesting itself to me—to keep my seat until a favourable opportunity offered of securing the services of a porter, to convey the luggage in my charge to safe quarters. Having watched over it so far, I was not going to abandon it now.

The object of my suspicions seemed in no hurry to go; he retained his seat, his head still out of window, till the lady rose, saying: 'We are at our journey's end, if I mistake not. May I trouble thee to let me pass out, friend?'

'Beg pardon, ma'am,' he exclaimed; and opening the door, he sprang down himself first, and then, with more politeness than I should have expected of him, helped her to alight. This done, he seemed in some perplexity as to what to do next. With his hand on the door-handle, he looked after her as she walked away towards the barriers raised round the luggage; then back at me; and finally, round and behind him. Suddenly, he darted off, and the next thing I saw him talking to a man in a snuff-coloured coat at some distance.

I had pulled the portmanteau from under the seat, in readiness to have it taken out, but had not yet succeeded in getting hold of a porter, when my friend returned, alone, and offered his help, observing that the train would be shunted almost immediately to make room for another, and that I had best look sharp. There was reason in what he said; and considering that the luggage would be at least as safe on the platform as in the carriage, I thought it well to avail myself of his assistance.

The portmanteau was heavy—singularly so, for its size. We lifted it out. I placed the rug and hat-box on the top of it, and then I took up my stand by its side. My companion shewed no disposition to run off with anything, but neither did he take himself off, and there was that in his manner I did not like. It was in vain that I gave him sundry hints to begone about his business; he met them all with the most impenetrable obtuseness, real or feigned, and kept hanging about me, never going more than a dozen yards or so from the place where I was standing. I was in an awkward predicament. I did not dare to leave my charge to call a porter, and they paid no heed to my shouts and gesticulations. Other trains were coming in, moreover, and taking off their attention. At this moment I observed a man coming towards us, who, at first sight, I should have said was the very same with whom my companion had been talking but a few minutes back; I had not seen his face very well, but the hue of his coat, and a somewhat peculiar slouch in his shoulders, were identical. But when he passed close to us, going on towards the luggage-van, and there was, so far as I could see, no sign of recognition between the two, I thought I must have been mistaken.

Presently, my quondam travelling-companion, the Quaker lady, came up the platform, followed by a porter, who was wheeling her luggage in a truck; and he again was followed, rather to my surprise, by the same man who had passed us on his way

down just before. This time, I particularly noticed both him and my red-haired friend. Their eyes met. Was I mistaken in fancying that they exchanged a glance of intelligence? The Quakeress nodded pleasantly; I raised my hat, and then called out to the porter to return for my luggage when he had disposed of that of the lady. The row of cabs was visible from the spot where I was standing, and I watched the Quaker lady enter one. Judge of my astonishment when at the last moment, after the luggage was adjusted, and they were on the point of starting, I saw the wearer of the snuff-coloured coat, the same who had been following in her wake as she passed me, jump up, and take his seat on the box beside the driver! The porter did not return as he had promised; I suppose some one else snatched him up, and I was beginning to grow very weary of my position. For the last quarter of an hour, a policeman had been pacing up and down the platform where we were standing. It had struck me that he was keeping an eye on my companion—who was very possibly known to the police as a dangerous character—but it only just now occurred to me that I could not do better than make over to him the guardianship of Mr Hooper's property. Accordingly, I beckoned him to my side. I half expected that my companion would have bolted on this, but he kept his ground.

'You wanted me, sir?' asked the policeman, looking rather odd, I fancied.

'Yes; I wish to give over this luggage into your charge. It is labelled *Wm. Hooper*, you will observe. It does not belong to me, but was in the carriage when I entered it. I cannot guess what has become of the owner; but it will no doubt be inquired after before long, so you had best give it up to the care of the Company. I recommend you not to let it out of your sight till it is safe in their keeping. I wash my hands of it.'

As I said these words, I looked sternly at the man whose evil designs, whatever they might have been, I hoped thus effectually to foil. So far from looking abashed, however, he returned me a smile that was the very embodiment of impudence.

'Have you no tongue in your head?' he said rudely to the policeman. 'Can't you tell the gentleman that you'll do his bidding?'

It was, to my mind, like a rat challenging a terrier; and I should have liked dearly to see him get a good set-down; but the policeman was too forbearing by far. Taking no notice of his insolence, he simply turned to me with a 'Very good, sir!' and then beckoned to a porter in the distance, who obeyed his signal fast enough.

With a parting admonition to him to look well to his charge, I took up my bag, and walked off, very glad to be free.

I called a cab, and drove at once to my solicitor's office. I had got out, and dismissed my vehicle, when, whom should my amazed eyes light on, standing but a few paces from the door I was about to enter, but my late travelling-companion, whom I had left, twenty minutes before, by the policeman's side on the Paddington platform! There was no mistaking the man, though he affected not to see me. Beyond doubt, he had either followed, or not impossibly accompanied me.

Indignant at this espionage, yet uncertain how to act, I determined to consult my legal adviser; who, without more ado, sent for a policeman. To him I pointed out my obnoxious fellow-traveller, who was still lounging about the nearest lamp-post,

and then, leaving him to take what steps he thought proper, Mr Smith and I proceeded to business.

Scarcely had we entered upon it, however, when the policeman returned, and with elongated face and hurried manner requested to speak to Mr Smith alone. To me he would not vouchsafe a word of explanation, and I had to wait in a small ante-room, in no very amiable frame of mind, while they two were closeted together.

The interview did not last long. There was an explosion of laughter in the next room, and then out came Mr Smith, looking excessively amused.

'My dear sir,' he exclaimed, 'whom do you think we have been setting this good fellow to watch?'

'How should I know?' I replied with some acrimony. 'Some one who's no better than he should be, I'm quite sure!'

'As to that,' said the lawyer, 'I've never yet come across the man who was. But setting jesting aside—it's too ridiculous. Why, it's one of his own feather—a detective, with whom he has often done business; and the best of it is, he—the detective, that is—has bid him keep a sharp look-out on you, and not let you get out some back-way unobserved. He says you are a scoundrel, and a very deep one; and that the account you have been giving of yourself is all humbug.'

'Preposterous!' I cried indignantly. 'You are making game of me, Mr Smith.'

'No such thing, my dear sir. Calm yourself, and I will explain. In the first place, I must tell you that he takes you for one William Hooper.'

'Well, and if he does? What, in the name of goodness, has that got to do with it?'

'Just this: that William Hooper, or rather a fellow assuming that name, is suspected, on good grounds, of having been concerned in a robbery of jewellery at Northsea last night; and of carrying off his spoils with him to-day. This detective was put on the scent, and flattered himself that he had secured both his person and his ill-gotten goods. It is not to be wondered at, when you took such good care of his luggage, that he should take you for the man himself.'

The policeman at this moment entered the room, followed by my late travelling-companion, who now, to my enlightened eyes, looked no longer disagreeably crafty, but simply clever and shrewd. It is not necessary to recapitulate all that passed, nor how Mr Smith at last succeeded in convincing the detective that I, his client of twenty years' standing, was a man of the most respectable antecedents, and in no possible way connected with the so-called William Hooper. Suffice it to say that he was persuaded of the mistake in time, and that then we all had a hearty laugh over what had occurred. The detective even went so far as to read out to us the instructions received that morning, on which he had been acting. These were a few hurried lines, directing him to be on the look-out for a man travelling up to town, under the name of *William Hooper*; to get a seat in the same carriage, and keep a strict watch on all his movements; also particularly to notice any communication that might pass between him and any fellow-traveller, as there was reason to believe he was accompanied by an accomplice in the shape of an elderly woman. Hence the interest he had taken in my conversation with the Quaker lady, of which he had in reality been taking notes in a peculiar shorthand of his own, fancying that more

was meant than appeared on the surface; and the eagerness with which he intercepted the pamphlet, which must have edified him extremely. It was left to his own discretion either to arrest the parties on reaching Paddington, or to let them go their own ways, following them up closely; by which means it was hoped he might be able to find the clue to some other robberies that had lately taken place in the same neighbourhood. This latter plan he had resolved to adopt with regard to me, and had also sent a colleague to accompany the poor Quaker lady on her route, ascertain where she went, and whether she were truly that which she gave herself out to be. The detective had been staggered for a moment by my voluntarily resigning the luggage to the charge of the policeman, but had thought it explained by the fact that I saw myself suspected, and hoped in that manner to get off myself, even at the sacrifice of the stolen goods. But if I were not William Hooper, where, then, was the real man? That was the question now uppermost in all our minds. 'There was one Northsea ticket,' remarked the officer. 'I thought I was sure of you then.'

'That was yours, surely!' I exclaimed.

'No, indeed, sir; I got in at Buntford. Was in a hurry, and had not time to look about me till we got to Tamwell. It must have been one of the two others.'

'Not the lady,' I said. 'I happened to notice her ticket as I handed it—it was taken at Whitworth, where she got in.'

'Then there is only that fellow in the respirator.—Ha!' he exclaimed suddenly, 'if I haven't been and let the right man slip through my fingers after all! What a fool I was not to suspect it!' And he quite ground his teeth with vexation.

'It can't have been he,' I said. 'He took no notice of the luggage whatever; and he cannot have failed to recognise it, sitting close beside it as he did.'

'I doubt he knew me better than I knew him,' replied the detective, 'and thought it best to keep quiet. I might have guessed it, when he was so bent on getting out at Chelston; but, then, I was so certain it was you. And then to go and give him that telegraphic message to send off! He took precious care it should not go, no doubt. No wonder they weren't quite on the look-out for me when we got to Paddington. However, I'll have him yet.—Good-morning to you, gentlemen; there's no time to lose.'

At the next assizes, the great jewel-robbery at Northsea came on. I do not, in general, take much interest in such matters; but hearing that my friend Smith was to be present, and feeling some curiosity as to the end of this affair, in one phase of which I had been so strangely mixed up, I made my way to the assize town.

When this particular case was called, two prisoners, a man and a woman, were led into the dock. I looked at them eagerly, fully expecting to recognise in the former the elderly gentleman who had been one of my companions in the railway carriage on that memorable journey to London. But no; he was tall, and young, and sandy-haired. Surely I had seen him somewhere before, though! And his companion? Yes, now I recollected. They were the same two, with the blue spectacles and lap-dog respectively, whom I had observed getting into the train at Buntford, just before it started.

The red-haired detective was present, and gave important evidence. The case did not last long, it was so clear against the prisoners, and both were convicted.

'You succeeded in getting hold of the right man, at last,' I remarked to the detective, when, the business of the day ended, he, Smith, and I met to dine, and talk matters over together at the hotel. 'But you made a mistake a second time, I see. That old man in the respirator was not the fellow Hooper, after all.'

'Don't be too sure of that, sir,' returned the detective. And then he proceeded to tell me the whole story, so far as he had been able to make it out. How the sandy-haired young man, having got into an empty carriage at Buntford, had contrived, by means of the appliances contained in his carpet-bag, to transform himself into an old man, so effectually disguised, as to be, he thought, quite safe from detection. On returning to his own carriage at Whitworth, he had, however, recognised the detective, and seeing that I had appropriated his luggage, judged it wisest to make no fuss, but quietly decamp at Chelston.

I have not had occasion, since my adventure, to make another journey by rail. When next I do so, I shall take good care not to enter a carriage that contains hat-box, rug, or portmanteau *minus* an owner.

PERSIAN BATHING.

THE Persians are no doubt under the belief that they are a very cleanly people. Baths abound all over their country, and these are carefully protected from such defilement as the presence of an Infidel within them could occasion. It is not in Persia as in Turkey, where all-comers may enter the public baths: none but Moslems may make use of the public baths in the Shah's dominions; or if, under special circumstances, permission be granted for Infidels to enter a Persian hammam, the probability is that that bath will immediately afterwards be pulled down. The members of the Turco-Persian boundary commission made use of a bath on one occasion at Ispahan, and on their departure from the town, the building was pulled down, and rebuilt. It was considered a very liberal thing on the part of the people of Kashan that they lately permitted a sick telegraph superintendent to make use of one of the baths of their town. The Englishman in question had fallen ill at Kashan, and was attended by a Persian doctor, who had him conveyed to his own house. When he had so far recovered, his host held a meeting of the priests, to consult as to the possibility of taking his patient to the bath. He encountered much opposition; but he argued so well on the duties of hospitality, that he actually brought his hearers to say that what he proposed was in accordance with the precepts of the Koran; and so he took his patient in triumph to the bath. From such jealous guardianship, one would infer that Persian baths were peculiarly free from anything impure or filthy; but such an assumption would be unjustified by facts, for of all the horrible sinks of impurity this world contains, a Persian bath is one of the worst. I do not mean to say that a Persian bath does not meet the great object of bathing, which I suppose to be the maintenance of the healthy action of the skin. No doubt, those who go through the disgusting ordeal implied by a

Persian bath are, in mere point of health, greatly the better thereof; but looking at the ordeal in point of what Englishmen call cleanliness, it seems disgusting in the extreme. The Persian bath contains a large reservoir sunk deep in the ground, and which is never drained or cleaned out from year's end to year's end. This tank is kept full of very hot water, and in this water the bathers swim about after they have undergone the various processes of being rubbed, mauled, and scrubbed. From the multitude of persons of both sexes and of all ages who spend daily so much time in the luxurious atmosphere of this retreat, it results that (so at least Persians have told me) the water is covered with a thick scum of dirt, which is never removed. Such are the baths which the sheeahs guard with so much care against being defiled by the Infidel!

On emerging from one of these unclean receptacles, the Persian resumes the clothes he wore before entering. It never comes into his head that there is anything dirty in wearing the same shirt from week's end to week's end, and in sleeping at night in the clothes he wears during the day—clothes which generally give shelter to what would disturb the comfort of any less thick-skinned man than a Persian.

IN THE FIRELIGHT.

OFTEN in this winter firelight,
While the shrill-voiced crickets sing,
Slowly rise the quiet beech-woods,
And the world is glad with Spring.

Embers shine, and shadows flutter,
But I see the violets grow;
Underfoot the brown leaves lingering,
And the white anemones blow.

And my darling, in her coffin,
Loves me as in days of yore;
Thirty years have flowered and faded,
But a dead grief lives once more.

Wild-birds call, and May-flowers beckon,
And my sweetheart, gone to rest,
Sits beneath the swinging larches,
With the anemones in her breast.

Night-winds sigh, and snow is falling;
But with firelight, fancies flow
Back to how we loved and parted,
In the spring-time, years ago.

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